

Must Reads For Writing Teachers

Atwell, Nancie. 1998. *In the Middle*, 2nd edition. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.
Are you a middle school writing or reading teacher? Do you want to create a dynamic, student-centered learning environment by inspiration of practical, useful, and successful strategies? Look no further! Nancie's first book was heralded as one of the most significant works for language arts educators over the past decade. This new version is even bigger, literally and figuratively!

Calkins, Lucy. 1994. *The Art of Teaching Writing*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Based on the teacher's personal experience in the classroom and as a researcher, this extensive text is full of practical, down-to-earth advice. This text is aimed at elementary teachers although the wisdom implied nods at all level, right through adult. This is a book that belongs on your list of staples.

Culham, Ruth. 1998, fifth edition. *Picture Books: An Annotated Bibliography and Activities for Teaching Writing*. Portland, Oregon: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

A book that once had a list of a few titles that complimented the teaching of different writing traits has expanded to include hundreds of current titles, which are organized by traits and all are fully annotated with teaching ideas. This volume also has over 50 lesson plans for traits using the picture books from the bibliography as examples.

Curry, Boykin & Brian Kasbar, editors. 1987. *Essays that Worked: 35 Essays from Successful Applications to the Nation's Top Business Schools*. 1990. *Essays that worked: 50 Essays from Successful application to the Nation's Top Colleges*. New York: Fawcett.

Both collections emphasize the creative use of traits in expository writing. Each collection features tips from college admission officers and employment offices on what kind of writing makes the best impression. Showing creativity original thought and connection to the reader is the style of GOOD writing that everyone is looking for.

Fletcher, Ralph. 1993. *What a Writer Needs*. (forward by Donald Murray). Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Lively, engaging, practical and inspirations are just a few words to describe Ralph Fletcher's writing. The words literally sing off the page and capture the spirit of why writing teachers continue to work so hard with their students to help them understand this extraordinarily difficult and complex topic. This book is one of the absolute best around so if you don't borrow or buy a copy of this book you will be missing out.

1996: *Breathing In: Breathing Out*

This is an excellent book that will inspire you to start keeping a writer's notebook if you don't already. Excellent job, Ralph!

Here are a few of Ralph's latest titles that you can't go wrong with.

- ***Craft Lessons*** – Teaching Writing K-8. 78 individual lessons for teaching writing.

- *A Writer's Notebook* – Helping student writers learn the craft and joy of writing.
- *Live Writing: Breathing Life Into Your Words* – a lesson that teaches students how to improve on various parts of their writing.

Fox, Mem and Lyn Wilkinson. 1993. *English Essentials: The wouldn't be without-it guide to writing well*. Macmillan Education Australia. ISBN 0-7329-1912-6.

The ultimate guide to understanding and teaching conventions! Teach the elements of “correct” writing. This text can be difficult to find because it is only published in Australia, but it is worth the hunt!

Fox, Mem. 1993 and 1991. *Radical Reflections. Dear Mem Fox, I Have Read All of Your Books, Even the Pathetic Ones*. New York: Vintage Books/Random House.

Two books that should be on your “not to be missed” list, Mem Fox knows all about working with kids and the highs and lows of teaching and writing. She seems to know how to say in words what you feel in your heart. Telling all and making you want to keep reading all the way to the end, you realize that you laughed, cried, and been deeply affected. Mem Fox is a gift to all of us who believe in the power of reading and writing to make a difference in everyone's lives.

Fraser, Jane & Donna Skolnick. 1994. *On Their Way: Celebrating Second Graders as They Read and Write*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.

This is a wonderful reading/writing workshop which specifically addressed the needs of primary readers and writers. The writers are second-grade teachers who show some useful day-to-day strategies to engage their students in literacy activities using wonderful examples, anecdotes, and stories. Frank and honest about things that work and things that don't work.

Graves, Donald. 1994. *A Fresh Look at Writing*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.

As a signature piece in Donald Grave's career, this book will surely add to your understanding and appreciation for the arte of writing and teaching writing. In his words, “You want to teach. You want to help children create and take pride in their work, just as you have. You see teaching as another kind of authorship, which encourages students to express what they know. You observe them on the playground and overhear them talking. You sense the stories and ideas embedded in a single written line. You witness their expressive potential and help them to realized their own intention. ‘You say to yourself, “This is why I want to teach.””

Hindley, Joanne. 1996. *In the Company of Children*. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

This book will tell you everything you need to know about running a reading/writing workshop in your elementary classroom. It includes, how to hold individual conferences, forms to share with students and teachers, keeping track of individual performance and goal setting, etc. This book will also tell you how to use Writer's Notebooks in your classroom. Chocked full of ready-to-use ideas, this book covers it all – from assessment to zesty ideas for mini-lessons.

Hydrick, Janie. 1996. *Parent's Guide to Literacy for the 21st Century (Pre-K through Grade 5)*. Urbana, Illinois: National Council Teachers of English.

Janie captures the key issues of teaching English Language Arts in the 21st century and presents them in a user-friendly format. Written originally for parents, this text can teach a lot about helping students gain strides in their literacy. Useful and practical, every teacher and school will want this book on hand as we work together toward shared vocabulary and understanding of what it means to be a literate citizen in the 21st century.

Lamott, Anne. 1994. *Bird by Bird: Some Instruction on Writing and Life*. New York: Doubleday.

"A warm, generous and hilarious guide through the writer's world and its treacherous swamps" – *Los Angeles Times*. "Superb writing advice...hilarious, helpful and provocative" – *New York Times* book review. Teachers find this book a delicious treat! You will love the references to how people learn and what they REALLY want to know about getting published. Give it as a gift or keep it for yourself for those times when you need a lift and a reminder about just how hard, but equally wonderful it is, to be a writing teacher.

Lane, Barry. 1993. *After THE END: Teaching and Learning Creative Revision*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Capturing your heart with new quotations, activities, strategies, and philosophy you will want to visit it over and over again for inspiration and delight. Add new life to your curriculum – especially the difficult and often frustrating revision process. Barry Lane is a great fan of using criteria as a tool for communication and revision.

Lederer, Richard. 1995. *The Write Way*. New York, New York: Simon & Schuster, Pocket Books.

This is an excellent resource book for all the tricky grammar, syntax, passive constructions, pesky punctuation, or sneaky jargon in our language. This is perfect for high school or college teachers or students looking for examples from "real life" about uses and abuses of the language. Many lessons can be used right from the text.

Murray, Donald M. 1985. *A Writer Teaches Writing*. Second edition. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin.

Donald Murray captured this reference book like a novel. Tough to beat, this book teaches what the writing process is all about. Murray discusses his own writing with graceful humor and appealing insight.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998. *Dear Parent*. Portland, Oregon, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

This piece captures the heart and soul of the 6-traits without having to commit to reading 200+ pages. This publication is perfect for teachers who are new to the model, staff discussion groups, and parents who want to get more actively involved with their child's writing life.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. 1999. *Seeing with New Eyes*, 5th edition. Portland, Oregon, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Focusing on how to connect the language and philosophy of the 6-trait model with our youngest writers and still be developmentally appropriate and student-friendly, this piece is one of the all-time best sellers at the Lab.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. *Writing from the Inside Out: Revising for Quality*. Portland, Oregon, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

This text illustrates a step-by-step format on how to use the 6-trait analytical writing assessment model for classroom instruction. It sets up the reasons why the idea of integrating assessment and instruction is so powerful, and then provides the reader with many specific lessons and strategies to help in lesson design. There is a 20 minute video which accompanies the text. Order through IOX, 310/822-3275 or fax 310/822-0269

Ramano, Tom. 1985. *Writing with PASSION*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Boynton/Cook Heinemann.

Geared toward high school, Tom Ramano's book grabs hold of the conventional wisdom regarding narrative writing as "fluff" and expository writing as "serious" and shakes it by the teeth. He uses examples and powerful voices of researchers Donald Murray and the gang to share his perspective. Narrative writing teaches us to objectify our experience – and by doing that we build a critical link to expository writing.

Routman, Regie. 1996. *Literacy at the Crossroads*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Regie helps us to understand how and where attacks come from as professional language arts educators struggle to meet the ever complex and diverse needs of their students. She believes that all professionals must become politically active in order to make sure our message is heard – accurately. This book contains heartfelt words of wisdom as Regie introduces different districts and schools across the nation, sharing insight about their struggles and efforts to reform. This text is honest, clear and heartfelt. It has voice and power.

Zinsser, William. 1994. Fifth edition. *On Writing Well*. New York: Harper and Row.

Writing well is what Zinsser does. You would beg for Zinsser to be your editor if you were out to write the great American novel. He knows what he's talking about and is able to explain clearly so you will understand and remember. Zinsser is bright, witty, knowledgeable and he breaks through to the heart of what good writing is about. You can entertain and enlighten your students at the same time if you read bits and pieces aloud to them.